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- ART. VII. — 1. *Gallus : or Roman Scenes of the Time of Augustus ; with Notes and Excursus illustrative of the Manners and Customs of the Romans*. Translated from the German of Professor BECKER, by FREDERICK METCALFE, B. A., Late Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge. London : John W. Parker. 1844. Post 8vo. pp. 421.
2. *Charicles : or Illustrations of the Private Life of the Ancient Greeks ; with Notes and Excursus*. Translated from the German of Professor BECKER, by the REV. FREDERICK METCALFE, M. A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. London : John W. Parker. 1845. Post 8vo. pp. 371.

ANCIENT history is in general hard to write, and hard to read. In some portions of it perfectly authentic facts are like Virgil's "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*"; and the speculation and hypothesis needed to give it continuity become a burden and a weariness to flesh and spirit. And even in the eras best known to us, we are possessed of few of those minor traits and secondary incidents, which, fitly blended with the more solid materials, impart a dramatic character and interest to modern history. The distinguished Greeks and Romans with whom we are the most intimately conversant are rather strongly marked types of whole classes of men, than individuals with idiosyncrasies that can never be repeated or matched. We see the epic march of great events towards a decisive issue, but not the by-play of subsidiary personages, that now accelerates, now checks, now deranges it. The sharp angular forms of social and domestic life are impressed on all existing monuments of antiquity, and reproduce themselves in every page of history; but the equally characteristic minutiae of manners, customs, and habits have left traces of themselves only in cursory allusions of comedians, epigrammatists, and satirists, which in the process of collation and interpretation acquire a stiff, scholastic air. Thus it happens, that ancient history, when best written by modern authors, may be compared to a collection of diagrams, rather than to a series of pictures, or, at best, to monochromatic engravings, rather than to form and color in their lifelike union. There is wanting an element,

which the historian cannot supply from his own proper materials, but without which ancient history cannot vie with modern in vividness of representation, and in the distinctness with which it adapts for current use the lessons of embodied and recorded experience.

The perception of this want has, no doubt, given birth to these forms of historical fiction, in which fancy permits itself no independent flight, but assumes the humbler office of vivifying and adorning undisputed facts. This is best done by the introduction of some imaginary traveller or envoy, who shall visit the scene of the story, and report his own conversations, journeyings, and experiences. He may be introduced into the heart of Athenian or Roman society at some strongly marked historical epoch, and may easily be so transferred from group to group, and from place to place, as to take successive cognizance of every department of intellectual, political, and social life, and to hear the narrative of previous events from those who participated in them, or are most familiar with their scenes or their memorials. One of the earliest and most successful works of this class is the "Athenian Letters," — the imaginary correspondence of an agent of the king of Persia, resident at Athens during the whole Peloponnesian war. They were written about the year 1740, by a society of friends, who were contemporaries at the University of Cambridge. The time, the age of Pericles, the culminating era of the Athenian intellect and one of the most eventful periods in Grecian history, was most happily chosen; and the Persian agent and correspondents from his own country are introduced into every circle and community from which light can be cast upon the history, culture, and manners of the age, while well contrived episodes supply the leading facts and features of earlier times, and the constant comparison of Grecian with Oriental institutions and customs brings out into the clearest light many traits which mere narrative would leave in obscurity. The style of the work is inadequate to its merit, in point of ingenuity and learning. It is frigid, jejune, and unattractive, betraying the exclusively classical training of the writers, their neglect of English models of composition, and their ignorance of the more recondite resources and the more delicate amenities of their native tongue.

Though these Letters were printed while Barthelemy was

a very young man, they were not published, nor did they come to his knowledge, till some time after the publication of his *Travels of Anacharsis the Scythian*. In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of the edition of 1781, he writes, with characteristic urbanity : — “ Had I been earlier acquainted with this work, I either should not have commenced mine, or should have attempted to approach so beautiful a model.” But in the judgment, as we suppose, of every candid critic, he surpassed this model, and ought to have surpassed, in a work that cost him thirty years’ toil, the mere classical sport of a knot of university students. His *Anacharsis*, as a compend of Grecian history, stands in our opinion unrivalled, and we can point to few works in any language, that can bear comparison with it for uniform dignity and beauty of style, and for the attractive interest shed over the most abstruse speculations and the driest details.

For the purpose of historical illustration, we regard works like these as far preferable to stories like those named at the head of this article, which emulate the artistical proportions, and of course must assume many of the restrictions, of the modern novel. The Persian or the Scythian traveller can go everywhere, pry into every thing, and ask all sorts of questions ; the Athenian lover or the Roman exquisite can be carried through the natural routine of the life of one in his own condition ; and the symmetry of the story is deranged, if the habits, haunts, and associations of his freedman or slave, or still more, if those of a person remotely connected with the hero, are described with any good degree of accuracy. Becker, in these books, has met this difficulty in its full force, and honestly succumbed to it. Each of his stories, in a large, leaded type, nominally occupies in Metcalfe’s translation considerably less than half of the pages in the volume, while nearly half even of this space is taken up by the finely printed notes ; and the remaining pages are devoted to excursus, in a medium type, on various subjects connected with the private life of the ancients. The consequence is, that the reader not studiously inclined hurries through the tales, and gets from them the merest smattering of archæology, while the notes and excursus, bristling with references and quotations in the original languages, and incapable from their very nature of presenting an inviting aspect, win the regard of scholars only. But had Becker adopted a device like

Barthelemy's, almost all the important matter in the notes and the excursus would have naturally found room in the text, and a foot-note here and there would have served for the minute explanations and the references, which would still have been desirable.

The hero of Gallus is the Cornelius Gallus of history, the soldier, courtier, and poet, best known through the commemoration of his unhappy loves in Virgil's tenth eclogue. The plot is simple, and in most respects closely parallel with the concluding events of Gallus's life. We are first introduced into his sumptuous home at midnight, on his return from his last supper with Augustus, at which the emperor's growing dislike for him, fostered by the calumnies of his pretended friend Valerius Largus, has at length betrayed itself in ways which admit no double interpretation. In league with Largus for his ruin is another pretended friend, a fictitious one, Pomponius, a poverty-stricken sycophant, who, without the knowledge of Gallus, was his successful rival with Lycoris, during her temporary desertion of him, and whose present enmity is the consequence of her return to her old lover. This feud, smothered under the disguise of confidential intimacy, which furnishes motive power for the whole story, fills an actual lacuna in the surviving accounts of the life of Gallus, without violating historical probability; for the hypothesis which identifies Lycoris with a well-known mistress of Antony has no foundation, nor is her reconciliation with her forsaken lord without frequent parallel in the history of illicit love, both ancient and modern.

In following Gallus from midnight till the next noon, we are made acquainted with all the principal apartments and furniture of his house and the mysteries of his toilet, we range among the volumes, "*lita cedro, et levi servata cupresso*," in his library, and look over his shoulder as he dictates the dedication of his last volume of Elegies and Epigrams, just ready, not for the press, but for the numerous scribes of Secundus the bookseller. To recover from his last night's chagrin, and to evade the consequences of some imprudent words into which wine and anger had betrayed him on retiring from the banquet, he has conceived the purpose, in which he is confirmed by the treacherous advice of Pomponius, of retiring for a few days to his villa near Capua. Having sent a letter requesting Lycoris to set out forthwith

for Baïæ, that they might interchange frequent visits during their retirement, he commences his journey at the fifth hour. On the route, our author contents himself with a somewhat expanded paraphrase of the first part of Horace's journey to Brundisium.* Then follows a minute and graphic description of the grounds and villa of Gallus, and of his reception by the well-fed and strongly attached members of his rural family.

Pomponius intercepts and suppresses the letter to Lycoris, and, presenting himself in disguise at her door, is introduced to her apartment, and attempts to excite her jealousy. But she has previously received through a faithful freedman a message of current tenor with the letter, and money for her journey, and, by going to Baïæ, leaves an opening for a detailed and vivid sketch of that most celebrated watering-place of antiquity. After Gallus has paid Lycoris a visit there, and on the day appointed for her reception at his villa, a courier arrives from Pomponius informing him of the continuance of Cæsar's anger, representing the severest decrees against him as impending, and urging his immediate presence in Rome that he may take measures for his own preservation. He finds on his arrival, that he has been forbidden to enter the palace of Augustus, or to reside in any of the provinces; but his estate and his city residence are still untouched. His confidential freedman, who, as well as Lycoris, has in vain endeavoured to open his eyes to the true character of Pomponius, urges him to propitiate the tyrant by outward marks of submission, and by the intercession of Virgil; but a visit from the false friend confirms him in the opposite counsel. He determines publicly to brave the emperor's anger, and makes the circuit of the forum in unusually sumptuous attire, and with a lofty and defiant bearing. In the evening, he sups by previous appointment with Lentulus, an

* We are inclined to dissent from Becker's criticism on *viator*, (Sat. I. 5, 16), which he supposes to denote one of the passengers, and not the mule-driver, alleging that the boatman at once managed the boat and the mule, and referring to vv. 18, 19, where the *nauta* ties the mule to a rock and goes to sleep. To us the very etymology of *viator* seems to denote one who works his passage; and that the weary driver should have first gone to sleep, and left his charge to be tethered by the boatman, only adds a new trait of grotesqueness to the incidents of the night, and reminds us of like interventions which have fallen under our own observation, when the poppy-crowned god has glided along the tow-path for miles before he could be wooed on board the suffocating boat.

exquisite and epicure of the inmost initiation ; and the supper, of which we have a minute description, presents rather too complete a catalogue for probability of all the refinements of dietetic luxury and display named or hinted at by Horace, Juvenal, Martial, and Petronius. Pomponius brings to the banquet two unknown *umbræ*, who contrive to draw from Gallus, in the excitement of deep drinking, treasonable speeches against Augustus, then leave the house abruptly, and the next morning appear in the Senate as witnesses against Gallus, on the charge of high treason. At the same time, Gallus receives a letter from Lycoris, giving him the whole history of her connection with Pomponius, and apprising him too late of the fatal errors into which he had been hurried by his misplaced confidence. News of the decree of banishment and confiscation reaches him through a friendly source ; and before the official messenger arrives at his door, he has written his last mandates, and fallen upon the sword that hung upon the wall as a memorial of the victories to which he owed his brief wealth and splendor. The relenting and grief of Augustus leave room for a public and honorable funeral, the ceremonies of which constitute the concluding chapter.

The revolting catastrophe of Gallus's suicide was not only demanded for the story by fidelity to fact, but claimed a prominent place in any faithful sketch of Roman manners in the Augustan age. Suicide seems then to have first become the reigning fashion of humbled heroism and disappointed ambition. It was never an indigenous custom in Greece, and was discountenanced alike by the principal legislators and philosophers of Athens ; and though frequent in Judea after its political connection with Rome, there are but two instances of it on record in all that part of Jewish history that precedes the Christian era ; nor is there the slightest reference to it in the didactic portions of either the Old Testament or the New, which could hardly have been the case, had the crime often fallen under the cognizance of the sacred writers. Nor does there occur more than here and there a solitary instance of this crime in the early portions of Roman history, and then only, as in the case of Lucretia, under such a pressure of outward circumstances as essentially to modify the moral complexion of the deed. Its frequency seems to have resulted from the action of Stoicism upon the previously in-

flexible elements of Roman character. The stern, harsh doctrines of the Porch could only mould the fickle, pliant Athenian into a decent tenacity of purpose, while the most absolute fatalism could not quench his hope under misfortune, or subdue the elasticity of his spirit. But the Roman, when Stoicism had given the last degree of tension to the rigid fibres of his moral nature, could not bend, and was constrained to break, under the weight of severe calamity. Hence suicide, which, under the sanction of Zeno's example, was at first only a permitted act, became, under the emperors, an absolute duty for the desperately unfortunate, and is repeatedly referred to by Seneca as the climax of heroic virtue.

The excursus appended to Gallus cover almost every department of private life, the banquet and the funeral, dress and games, education and literature ; and as every statement is confirmed by the citation of original authorities or existing monuments, the question of their accuracy and trustworthiness ceases to be debatable. The story, however, is full of real or probable anachronisms, which are not indicated with any degree of distinctness in the excursus. Gallus died forty years before the death of Augustus, — at an age when the wealth of conquered kingdoms, the contagion of foreign manners, and the overthrow of Roman liberty were only commencing their work of corruption. Luxury was far below its climax, and both the memory of early simplicity, and a public sentiment not yet wholly silenced or perverted, set bounds to the extravagance and ostentation of individuals, while Augustus himself, with many odious traits of character, was yet a very anchorite, compared with most of his successors. Horace's darkest pictures of society and manners are rose-colored by the side of Juvenal's. But the larger part of the materials of the story of Gallus are derived from Juvenal and Martial, who wrote a full century after the death of the hero, and from the excavations at Pompeii, which bear valid testimony with reference to no earlier date. This blending of ages so near in themselves, and made so much the nearer by the remote perspective in which we view them, was perhaps unavoidable, certainly allowable, in what was professedly a work of fiction ; but might not the author, in the critical part of his work, have taken more diligent note of time, and presented under every prominent head, by a chron-

ological arrangement of his authorities, a sketch of the growth of Roman luxury and profligacy under the earlier emperors ?

Charicles, as a story, is in every respect greatly inferior to Gallus. Its hero is a young man of no definite traits of character, and the whole plot is laid among "people whom nobody knows" ; nor are we introduced to a single real or imaginary personage of any consideration in literature, philosophy, or political life. Indeed, the scene is laid at the period, so barren alike of genius and of virtue, which succeeded the battle of Chæroneæ. Why this era should have been selected it is hard to say, especially as all the authorities most relied on belonged to the preceding century, and might have been more justly cited in illustration of the age of Pericles. We suppose that we have in Charicles and his associates a very faithful picture of Athenian cockneyism, its manners, haunts, occupations, and vices, but hardly relieved by any distinct view of domestic life, for which the materials lay ready at the author's hand. There is, indeed, a lovely female figure led two or three times across the stage, and finally, in youthful widowhood, married to the hero ; but her story is so awkwardly got up, and the passion for her sits so ungracefully on the insipid bridegroom, as to authorize the suspicion that she was invented only to furnish opportunity for the description of a Greek wedding. We could have wished to see more of the beautiful Cleobule, and would at the same time have gladly missed from a tale specially designed for the instruction of ingenuous youth the adventure of Charicles with the Corinthian harlot, however true it may be to the prevalent style of manners and morals in that metropolis of luxury and lust. The excursus appended to this volume are full and explicit on most of the subjects to which they relate ; but, while we could dispense with that on the *Hetæræ*, and while we could hardly have expected Charicles to take us to the Academy or the Stoa, we should have been glad to go with Becker himself to resorts no less intimately connected with Athenian life than the barbers' shops or the gymnasia.

Not having seen these books in the original German, we can pass no judgment on the general fidelity of the translator. But his work bears marks of the rawest juvenility and the coarsest taste ; and, contrary to what might have been ex-

pected, these marks are tenfold more frequent in Charicles than in Gallus, though in the interval between the publication of the two the translator had acquired his clerical *prænomen*, and had emerged from his baccalaureate Master in Arts and Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. There is hardly a page of Charicles on which we do not find, in the mouths of the interlocutors or in describing their doings, either mere Anglicisms, which could not be written in Greek, or phrases appropriate to exclusively modern ideas, or the most idiomatic colloquialisms, which, as applied to objects and customs of remote antiquity, have the effect of the grossest burlesque. We will justify this criticism by a few instances taken at random. We have in a single sentence "intellectual *sagas*," and "*fair*y-*tales* full of superstition and *glamour*," as the staple of nursery instruction for Athenian children, p. 9. Two friends, after breakfasting together under a tree, "broke up their *bivouac*," p. 16. Phorion has in his library a collection of "historic *souvenirs*," p. 43; and "delicate objects of *wax-work*" are "his especial *hobby*," p. 44. A party of young men amuse themselves with "*conundrums*," p. 83. Charicles visits the "*spa* of *Ædepsos*," p. 104. We have "a round table *veneered* with maple," p. 118. The heroine of the story is duly provided with an "*abigail*," p. 171. We have also a great deal of the slipshod French, which may add a grace to the dialect of cockneydom, but always disfigures a printed page. Thus we have "*recherché* unguents," "*malgré* his refusal," "passing the *cortége*" (in which, by the way, a "*parasol*," a "*chaise*," and a "breakfast *equipage*" were prominent objects). At a banquet, which forms one of the principal and best described scenes in the volume, the Sicilian cook is an *artiste*, — a *danseuse* "throws a *summersault* [a word neither French nor English] right into the centre of a hoop, and then out again," after which, a boy, who had long been her fellow-performer, "made his *début*." In several of these cases, it will be seen that Mr. Metcalfe has not only violated good taste in his choice of words, but that he is entirely ignorant of the actual power of such words as he uses. But his most surprising feat of Gallicism occurs in the translation of one of the Prefaces, in which he makes his author say, — "It cannot be denied that some chapters have been elaborated with more *penchant* than others." Now Mr. Metcalfe

may, for aught that appears to the contrary, be an accomplished German scholar; but it is, we suppose, an undisputed canon of criticism, that a translator is bound to understand the language or languages of his version, no less than that of his original.

But our translator has laid himself open to another very serious charge. He has not merely altered Becker's arrangement, by throwing the excursus in each work together into an appendix, instead of interspersing them among the divisions of the story. In addition to this, which, as we think, was done wisely and well, he tells us, with characteristic elegance, that in Gallus "a little lopping has been resorted to"; and he adds, — "The numerous passages from Roman and Greek authors have, in many instances, been only referred to, and not given at length; matters of minor importance have been occasionally omitted, and more abstruse points of disquisition not entered into." In the Preface to *Charicles*, too, in a paragraph which it must have cost him great pains to elaborate, he tells us that "all iteration, to which the learned author seems unduly propense, has been avoided as much as possible; and the multitude of quotations often merely referred to, some left unnoticed, when it seemed unnecessary to multiply authorities, or only the pith of them, and that part strictly apropos to the subject, inserted. In consequence of these alterations, some passages had to be remodelled, and rather adapted in English, than literally translated." He hopes, however, that "the liberties he has thus taken in greatly reducing the bulk of the work will meet the approbation of the English scholar; and that the value of the book, which is in high estimation in Germany, will not have been diminished by this Procrustean operation." The cool effrontery of "this Procrustean operation," by a youth who has not learned to write his own mother-tongue, on the labors of one of the few great men of the age, outrivals the boldest myths touching American pretension and impudence, recorded in the pages of our least friendly Transatlantic contemporaries. It is a process which does atrocious injustice to Professor Becker. He has a right to be read in full, or not at all. His reputation as a thorough scholar and competent critic is wantonly placed at hazard. We make no doubt that essential matter has been omitted. We found, on our first reading of the excursus, lamentable

deficiencies both in facts and in illustrations, and missed some "points of disquisition," on which we had hoped to find ourselves instructed. These deficiencies we had charged upon the author, and should still have done so, had we not in our critical capacity made it a point of honor to read the translator's Prefaces. We now doubt not that on these subjects, which lack full elucidation, we should have it in Becker's own books. We hope that these volumes will not be reprinted in this country. We believe that an *English* translation of the *entire* works is authorized, and would be fully rewarded by the growing wants and ripening taste of the American public in the department of learning to which they appertain.

It would be of little interest to our readers for us to follow out in detail any one of the single topics of investigation suggested by these volumes. We prefer presenting some more general view; and the very structure of these fictitious narratives affords one which we will ask leave to develop. Our author's problem was, to present a comprehensive and life-like portraiture, first of Roman, and then of Athenian civilization. In order to do this, he takes us into the circle of society nearest the imperial court of Augustus, and introduces us to a portion of the "moneyed aristocracy" of Athens. We see the interior of no poor man's house. We are made acquainted with no forms of modest elegance and lowly refinement. We have none of that beautiful blending of lights and shadows, which, in the hands of Crabbe, Wilson, Wordsworth, and a host of modern writers that we might name, have invested the "simple annals of the poor" with incomparable grace and beauty. And Becker was right in attempting nothing of this kind; for neither ancient nor modern paganism affords materials for such delineation. For the plebeians, the burden-bearers, the toiling and suffering members of the body politic, pagan institutions have done absolutely nothing, and Christianity is far enough from having wrought its full work for them; but one of the strongest points of contrast between pagan and Christian civilization is, that the former has neither promised nor attempted any thing except for the privileged few, while the latter embraces within the circuit of its influences all of every condition in life, and has done much, and given promise of infinitely more, for those in penury and depression.

In exhibiting the darker side of this contrast, we ought to take first into view the essentially aristocratic character of the religious systems of antiquity. The descent of the human race from a single parent stock was not recognized in the classic mythology. To be sure, those whose ancestral trees bore gods, demigods, and deified heroes on their remoter branches, probably had very little sincere faith in their own celestial parentage; but such fables were sufficient to veil from their regard all traces of a community of origin between themselves and their poorer brethren, while these latter undoubtedly deemed themselves literally "*terræ filios*," inherently and essentially base and vile. Indeed, it can hardly be said that the different classes in social life had a religion in common. From the earliest period of authentic history, there is no reason to suppose that men of intelligence and culture had any sincere belief in the popular theology. Atheism, universal skepticism, and every possible gradation of belief from pantheism up to a tolerably pure and rational theism, divided the educated classes, while the worship of the temples was supported and administered solely for its political uses, in sustaining the government and the aristocracy, and in repressing by supernatural terrors the tendencies of the popular mind towards revolution and a larger liberty. There can be little doubt that the Eleusinian mysteries consisted essentially of a purer philosophy of religion than it was deemed safe to promulgate openly; and the crime of Socrates lay, not in his believing as he did, (for probably neither his accusers nor his judges were more orthodox polytheists than himself,) but in his initiating unqualified persons into his simpler, purer creed.

Yet worse, the classic mythology, while it claimed the abject submission of the unprivileged classes, promised them nothing. It had indeed its Elysium, but no place there for those who adorned quiet and lowly spheres by virtuous lives. Look at Virgil's enumeration of those who occupy the happy fields.

" Here a blest train advance along the meads,
And snowy wreaths adorn their graceful heads, —
Patriots, who perished for their country's right,
Or nobly triumphed in the field of fight.
There holy priests and sacred poets stood,
Who sung with all the raptures of a god, —

Worthies, whose life by useful arts refined,
With those who leave a deathless name behind,
Friends of the world and fathers of mankind."

And these are all; nor in the whole range of the classics do we find a single instance in which modest merit in a humble walk of life is named as a possible introduction to a place in Elysium. Nor did philosophy — the purer religion of the few — show greater favor to the poor and unlettered. Her own disciples were the only guests at her banquet of the gods. Even Socrates, in Phædo, says of those who practised such virtues as "temperance and justice," "without philosophy," that they are transmuted at death into "bees, wasps, or ants"; but that "it is not lawful for any to pass into the genus of the gods, except such as through a love of learning have philosophized."

We might trace the same features in the forms of paganism still existing among nations that have made any progress in the arts of civilized life. In China and Hindostan, a certain degree of culture and social elevation emancipates all who attain to it from the bondage of the popular superstitions, and initiates them into purer forms of belief or unbelief; while there has never been a pagan nation, in which the principle of social aristocracy has been fairly developed, where the paradise both of the popular and of the expurgated theology has not been aristocratic and exclusive.

We have spoken first of religious ideas in their bearing on the poor and depressed, because they always give the tone to political institutions, condemning those who rest under the frown of the gods to numerous civil disabilities and burdens. On this point the name *republic*, as applied to several of the ancient states, is apt to mislead the student of history. These republics were all of them, in their origin, military oligarchies, and retained much of their primitive spirit through the whole period of their history. Besides the numerous slaves, who were of course not represented in the government, the poorer freemen were ineligible to office; and such was the arrangement of all public business, as to give them the mere empty show of participation in the councils of the state, while the whole power was actually lodged with a small minority of rich men. The constitution of Athens was such, that all the forms of a free election or a popular vote might be passed through, and yet the assembly of the

people be in fact little more than a court of registry for the decrees of the Senate, which, indeed, were in full legal force without the popular sanction until the next meeting of the citizens, though a whole year might intervene. Thus, as regards the actual administration of the republic, the people possessed little more than a *veto* power. In Rome, a hundred senators might outvote a thousand plebeians, and the voting of the crowded centuries of the populace was nothing better than a clumsy and unmeaning farce. Moreover, what show of liberty was possessed by the citizens of these republics hardly extended beyond the city walls ; and dependent provinces were robbed and devastated rather than governed, hardly sufficient care being extended over them to suffer the fleece to grow for successive shearings.

The idea of the natural, inalienable rights of the individual citizen seems to have entered the mind of no statesman or philosopher of antiquity. The contrast between the ancient and modern doctrine on this point has left a curious memorial of itself in the various uses of the word *privilege* (*privilegium*), which literally denotes special legislation with reference to a private citizen. It was originally used in a bad sense.* Cicero in his oration *Pro sua Domo* makes long and bitter complaint of the *privilege* of having his house torn down. In even the most arbitrary governments in Christendom, it is tacitly admitted that the individual citizen has certain rights, which may be increased, but cannot be taken away, by special legislation ; and thus *privilege* has changed its meaning, so as to denote the immunities and exemptions, which may be conferred on some, without derogating from the natural and conceded rights of others.

But the legal possession of rights could have been of little avail to a poor man, if obliged to maintain them in any of the ancient courts of judicature. An impartial judiciary has left no record of itself in Greek or Roman history. "To him that hath it shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath," might have been inscribed, as the most appropriate motto, over the so-called halls of justice. A suitor without wealth or power to back him would have been drugged at once with hellebore, if he

* "*Leges privatis hominibus irrogari, — id est privilegium.*" — Cicero *Pro sua Domo*, 3.

had a friend to care for his sanity. We suppose, that no one can have followed Cicero through the surviving monuments of his forensic eloquence, without an unutterable contempt for the tribunals of his day, as susceptible of no appeals whatever, except those made by the threats of the more powerful or the bribes of the richer party. How does the anticipated triumph swell in every sentence, when his client, though guilty and despicable to the last degree, is backed by the right men, or possesses a *census* appreciable by the venal judges ! and how manifestly does he droop and flag, from his very exordium, when truth and right are his only allies !

Did our limits permit, we should trace out with some minuteness of detail the political condition of the poor beyond the pale of Christendom at the present day, and exhibit them in Persia the abject slaves of royalty, in India despised outcasts whose touch contaminates, in Turkey never an arm's length from the bastinado or the bow-string, in China and its cognate kingdoms crouching on all fours before the humblest deputy or emblem of the imperial power, and possessing no more sway over their own destiny than over the orbit of Saturn.

In fine, the rights of man as such have nowhere begun to be recognized except under Christian culture. Nor should we expect the case to be otherwise. The ideas of man's common parentage and common destiny are essential to the conception of his native and inherent rights. Men in society stand like the separate pillars in a colonnade, connected by the continuous entablature above and stylobate below. Bury the latter in the earth, and the former in the clouds, and you disjoin and isolate the pillars. Thus if, in the column of human life, the base and capital are both kept out of view, there remain no points of union or grounds of mutual obligation, but only conflicting interests, selfishness, indifference, jealousy, and alienation.

But in order to gain a distinct view of the condition of the poor, we must look into their homes. And with regard to the states of classic renown, the most striking fact in the domestic condition of this class of people is the overwhelming majority of them that had no homes of their own. Slaves became so either by birth, debt, captivity, or conquest ; and what greatly augmented the severity of their lot was, that they were either the born fellow-countrymen of their masters,

or from nations of equal culture and refinement, or even superior, as in the case of the numerous Greek slaves in Rome, — of course, therefore, capable of feeling the restraints and the ignominy of bondage far more deeply than had they been from confessedly inferior races. The lapse of a freeman into the most abject servitude was very easy. By the Roman law of the twelve tables, a debtor, who remained insolvent after an imprisonment of sixty days, might either be sold into slavery, or killed and his body divided among his creditors ; and the latter, if the more merciful alternative, can seldom have been adopted in a nation not laboring under the suspicion of cannibalism. In Athens, there were at one time *twenty-one thousand* citizens, and *forty thousand* slaves. In the little island of Ægina, there were *four hundred and seventy thousand* slaves. The Helots of Sparta were kept within safe limits, as to their numbers, only by the sword. Their indiscriminate slaughter was permitted and encouraged. The young citizens were wont to murder them for exercise, and in order that they might enter the military service of the country already familiar with the use of weapons and the sight of human blood. Whenever these humane recreations were pursued with too little zeal, and the Helots multiplied too fast, they were “lopped” down to the right numerical proportion by a legal massacre, under the supervision of the Ephori, on whom this duty devolved by the fundamental law of the state. Thucydides relates the murder of *two thousand* of these wretched beings at one time.

Under the Roman emperors, it was no uncommon thing for single citizens to own from *ten* to *twenty thousand* slaves. Nor were those held in bondage taken under legal protection in any form or way until the reign of Constantine.* To the severest treatment, even from a stranger, they could oppose no resistance, nor was any mode of redress for injury open to them. Their evidence in courts of justice was valid only when taken by torture. If a master was murdered, public opinion not only sanctioned, but prescribed, the slaughter of all his slaves, though numbered by thousands. Tacitus, in describing a case of this kind, in which only *four hundred* were sacrificed, coolly says that it was done *de vetere more*. In addition to all this, the murder of slaves was often prac-

* “Cum in servos *omnia* liceant,” &c. — Seneca *de Clementia*, I. 18.

tised as one phasis of the same ostentation of wealth which sought more harmless displays in expending thousands of sesterces on a mullet, or was perpetrated in a drunken frolic by the master and his friends. In this immense class there was a small percentage of confidential servants, scribes, men of letters, persons of rare skill as cooks or artisans, too valuable to be wantonly sacrificed or inhumanly treated except for some grave cause of provocation ; and their outward condition was often one of ease, luxury, and affluence. But for the vast majority of this class there were no domestic privileges or comforts, — they labored often in chains, — modesty and virtue had no defence or safeguard, — their homes had fewer immunities, comforts, and privileges, than the stables and kennels of their unreasoning fellow-servants.

The free poor, both of Athens and of Rome, were literally public paupers, — in the former city, nourished by a scanty daily stipend from the treasury, — in the latter, dependent mainly on the public granaries, and on largesses bestowed to purchase their shouts, or to enlist them as accomplices in rebellion, treason, or rapine. They had no regular habits of industry, fixed means of support, or stable place of abode ; but were like a billowy ocean, tossed to and fro by every breeze of popular tumult. They lived chiefly in the streets and in places of public concourse, and knew the ties of domestic life only to violate and to sunder them. And in Rome their condition must have been rendered inconceivably more corrupt and brutal by the gladiatorial shows and the conflicts of men with savage beasts, which they always sought so clamorously and thronged so greedily, and by which every lingering vestige of kindly domestic feeling must have been utterly effaced. We must add to this picture the well-known fact, that across the barrier between the rich and the poor only the arm of oppression and violence ever reached, — that there was no institution or form of private charity, by which the superfluities of the one class were ever made to eke out the penury, help the infirmity, enlighten the ignorance, or relieve the degradation, of the other.

Infanticide occupies a conspicuous place in the domestic history of Greece and Rome. In Athens and in Sparta, the exposure of weak and sickly infants, or of those whose parents were unable to bring them up, was not only tolerated,

but sanctioned, — nay, enjoined, by the wisest and most humane legislators. Yet more, both Plato and Aristotle speak of this custom with the highest commendation ; and Plutarch, with all his humanity, indorses in mass the laws of Lycurgus, which contain express provisions for the murder of feeble and deformed children, as entirely free from injustice and cruelty, and speaks of the legislator himself as a morally perfect man. We find it generally said, though we know not on what authority, that this savage custom was transplanted from Greece into Rome ; but however this may be, it found a congenial soil in the harsh, emotionless utilitarianism of the Roman character, nor was this among the many practical *Grecisms*, of which the purists of the Augustan age complained so vehemently, as having impaired the primitive simplicity of the Romulean stock. That this practice of infanticide was indigenous in Rome is rendered probable by the reference to it involved in the early and uniform use of *tollo* in the sense of *educate*,* (the child whom the father did not see fit to lift from the ground being exposed,) and also by the fact, that in the Grecian states, the exposure of infants, frequent as it was, was an exception to the general rule, while in Rome it was the rule, to which the father in every individual case created an exception by his own act. We have given a prominent place to this custom, in treating of the condition of the poor, because, though practised to a scandalous extent in the upper classes, its imagined relief and benefit must have been, from the nature of the case, and appear to have been, in point of historical fact, the most frequently made available, by those whose *poverty* and *will* gave joint consent to the deed.

But there is no need of going back to those early times for illustrations of the domestic wretchedness of the pagan poor. We might simply point our readers to Hindostan, where (under the ban of a superstition no doubt repudiated at heart by the intelligent and educated classes, though maintained in practice solely by their obstinate adherence to it) those who discharge the menial offices of society are forbidden access to all that can make life tolerable, excluded

* To this idiom we curiously enough owe the use of *rear* in the same sense in our own language, very probably that of *raise* (if, like very many other so-called Americanisms, it is a relic of the early English, grown obsolete on its native soil), and possibly that of *bring up*.

even from the public markets and wells, forced to dwell in miserable hovels remote from all other habitations, prohibited from touching the persons or entering the dwellings of any out of their own caste, and compelled to bequeath this blighting curse of Cain to their remotest posterity. There, too, the children, especially of these Pariahs, are daily exposed in baskets to be devoured by birds of prey, or left in more sheltered places to die by starvation. Or we might refer to China, — the pattern empire of modern unbelievers, — the mirror of civilization and refinement with the ungodly fanatics of the French Revolution, constantly cited by infidel philosophers of the Voltaire school to show how high a state may rise without the ministry of Christian institutions. There, besides the millions who live in mud hovels, low, windowless, filthy beyond description, and without division of apartments, there are other millions whose only homes are the crowded boats on the rivers and canals. There, too, infanticide is reduced to a science, there being no less than four canonical modes of performing the operation, where the father prefers killing the infant outright to exposing him. This custom is confined chiefly to the poorer classes, among whom, while the sons are spared to support their parents in old age, according to the best usage every other daughter, and not unfrequently five out of six, are destroyed. In the city of Pekin no less than *nine thousand* infants are annually exposed or murdered, and a proportionally large number in every part of the empire.

Such was and is the poor man under pagan systems and institutions. Let us now see how he is regarded and treated under the auspices of Christianity. And here we must be permitted to refer at the outset to the Jewish revelation, which is less a distinct system than the foreshadow and embryo of the Christian. One of the most striking characteristics of the Mosaic code is the rich vein of humanity which runs through it. The poor there find themselves traced back to the same parentage, loved by the same God, bound by the same religious ties, with their wealthy neighbours. At the sanctuary and the altar the only distinction is one in their favor, namely, that by which the least costly offering on their part is pronounced no less acceptable than the hecatomb which the rich may bring. In the rest of the Sabbath, the voice from Sinai made special mention of the man-servant and the maid-servant ; nor is there one among the many appointed festivals, in which

they, together with the poor and stranger, are not specially enumerated among the guests. Mark how loving a spirit for the lowly and distressed breathes in the following laws, which are but a few among many that we might cite. "If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner." "Take thou no usury of him, nor increase." "If thou take his raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it to him again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee." "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of the strangers that are in the land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it be sin unto thee." "When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward. It shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow." "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him; but thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye know the heart of a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." In addition to all these merciful provisions, when a poor man alienated his patrimony, or sold himself into servitude, he could do so only for a term of years; and when the year of jubilee arrived, though the debt were unpaid, the debtor resumed his freedom, and returned to the home of his fathers. These laws banished from poverty all show of abjectness, and embraced the extremes of social life in a finely woven network of the kindest sympathies and charities. Nor does the whole period of Jewish history, prior to the Christian era, among its many records of apostasy and guilt, reveal a single trace of the disabilities, sufferings, and unnatural crimes among the poor, which deform the annals of all other ancient nations. Indeed, we have abundant reason to believe, that the distinctions of social life have nowhere rested with so slight a pressure upon the less favored classes, and that the burdens and miseries of penury have nowhere been so slightly felt, as in Palestine, during the entire period of Hebrew independence.

In considering the direct agency of Christianity upon the

condition of the poor, the lowliness of its Founder's birth, and the humble callings from which he chose his apostles, demand our first regard. All the circumstances of its origin attach a peculiar sacredness to poverty, and claim for it, not so much pity, as tender reverence. The Christian cannot look down upon the poor without throwing scorn upon the Author and the first witnesses of his faith. Then, too, the doctrines of Christianity multiply points of contact and of union among those most widely separated as to the endowments of fortune. They throw the mere outward accidents of life into insignificance, by merging them in the great facts of a common origin, a universal and fatherly Providence, and an immortal being of which the present state is the mere infancy. The services of our religion, also, have never been so administered as to recognize the barriers of caste among the worshippers. Under the most lordly hierarchy, the church and the altar have been equally free for prince and peasant, lord and beggar.

Nor is this mere speculation. The Christian Church, from its very foundation, has recognized the claims of the poor in its organization and its ritual. On the memorable day of Pentecost, before which a large upper room was sufficient for the assembling of the Church Universal, there was not upon the earth a philanthropic institution of any kind, or, except in the Hebrew Scriptures, the distinct record of a philanthropic idea. In the narrative of that day, the amazing fact stands written in terms of the most unobtrusive modesty : — " They that believed sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." Almost the next noteworthy incident in the same history is the appointment of seven men (whose successors have never ceased to discharge like ministries of love), " men of honest report, and full of the holy spirit and wisdom," whose office it was to take care of the poor widows in the church at Jerusalem. Shortly after this, we find St. Paul collecting from remote and stranger provinces, and bringing with him alms for the straitened and impoverished disciples of the holy city, — alms, too, gathered on the first day of the week, in connection with the rite of Christian communion, — a rite which from that day to this has been the fountain-head of an incessant flow of charity to man, no less than of heavenward vows and aspirations.

As to the political condition of the poor, it must be admitted on all hands that Christianity lays a broad and deep foun-

dation for individual freedom and progress, that its legitimate result would be a system of government in which all power should emanate from the people at large and be amenable to their control, and that this result has been more or less perfectly realized in different communities, very much in the proportion in which the Christian Scriptures have been freely circulated and generally understood. Our religion found the world filled with despotism ; but it has already scourged the demon of tyranny to the extreme eastern verge of Christendom, and even there is fast undermining his throne and disenfranchising his subjects. Elsewhere (and even there the same principle has begun to work), arbitrary forms of government perpetuate themselves by propitiatory offerings to the spirit of freedom, monarchies are growing paternal, and sovereigns anticipate popular aggression upon their power by grants and concessions, by liberal maxims of policy, by institutions of education and charity in which the wants and claims of their meanest subjects are distinctly recognized. And all this is in accordance with the peaceful spirit of Christianity, which declares no war against names and forms, foment not revolution, and forbids sedition, but quietly infuses into the mind of king and subject, noble and plebeian, thoughts and sentiments which create community of interest and feeling, and blend power and weakness, wealth and penury, by the correlatives of protection and contentment, charity and gratitude.

As regards slavery, Christianity has wrought an immense work. It has once rolled the Atlas burden from off the whole bosom of Christendom. We have seen that pagan Rome left the slave out of the pale of legal protection. With the first Christian emperor commenced the series of legislative enactments in his favor ; and from that time the number of slaves in the Roman empire was continually diminishing, and their condition rapidly improving, until, in the twelfth or thirteenth century, domestic slavery was extinct within the purlieu of Christian civilization. It is worthy of remark, that this consummation was attained at the very era when ecclesiastical power was at its height, and that the last essential steps were taken towards it, not only under Christian, but under expressly ecclesiastical auspices. Pope Alexander III., the first Roman pontiff who dared to place his foot on the neck of a prostrate monarch, was the first legislator to promulgate the law of universal liberty ; and " this law alone,"

says Voltaire, always chary of praising any church dignitary, "ought to render his name dear to all the people of the earth."

For the form of slavery which has since grown up in the New World we are no apologists. It was established under reiterated remonstrances and anathemas from the Church, and would never have gained a firm foothold, could her voice have been heard and her arm felt with unabated power across the intervening waste of waters. But the slavery of which we now speak is far less extensive than the Pagan system, is held in check by numerous legal restraints, is connected with many alleviating circumstances, and with a large preponderance of humanity and kindness over violence and cruelty, and binds a race, to which, though a wrong and an outrage, it is the less galling from their never having known the blessings of freedom and refinement, and to which it may be ultimately beneficial in bringing them and their whole continent under civilizing and Christianizing influences. Meanwhile the axe is already laid at the root of this tree of evil. By the unanimous consent of Christian nations, the slave-ship is now an outlaw and a pirate ; and universal emancipation is retarded less by a surviving attachment to the wrong, than by the difficulty of readjusting on principles of perfect equity the balance of rights and interests once deranged by the intrusion of evil.

But in order to trace most satisfactorily the benign agency of Christian institutions and ideas in behalf of the poor, we must look into their homes. It is a significant fact, that there is no word in the Greek or Latin corresponding to our word *home* ; for the inflections of *oikos* and *domus* denote a mere local habitation, without any of the numberless associations of a moral nature which distinguish *home* from *house*, and make the former one of the most complex words in the language. Home, the name, the idea, the fact, is the creation and gift of Christianity. To her we owe the unity and permanence of the conjugal relation, with the laws of modesty and chastity that guard it, the equal and honored place of woman in the household, and the principles and culture that make her in soul and character a wife and mother. To her we owe the abolition of infanticide, the emancipation of the child from the father's untempered despotism, and all the truths, sentiments, and motives that can be relied on to sustain parental duty or to nourish filial piety. And while our religion has bestowed

these positive benefits upon man in his domestic relations, it has made itself the faithful ally of art and taste (which previously served only for public uses or for the selfish ostentation of wealth and luxury) in the enriching and adorning of quiet home-life. At the same time, it early lent its aid to banish the vile and cruel forms of public amusement, which could not be enjoyed without crushing in the germ those tender, genial elements of character on which the happiness of home depends. The first edict against gladiatorial shows was issued by the first Christian emperor, and in less than a century from that time Honorius completed the work which Constantine had so well begun.

In these domestic blessings the poor share to the full. Where the spirit of Christianity breathes, the house, however wretched, is still a home, and those under its roof experience a happiness in one another, an outflow of parental, filial, brotherly and sisterly affection, a divine and heavenly harmony of interest, feeling, and hope, which they would not yield up for uncounted millions. In such a family, penury ceases to be abject, and is almost never comfortless. An air of grace and refinement invests the meanest hovel, and sheds a charm over the lowliest domestic group, if the homeless wanderer of Galilee has blessed the dwelling. In many an abode, from which the pampered nursling of fortune would turn with disgust, the father, coarse and rude in outward aspect, when he has washed off the dust and dew of daily toil, puts on all the modest dignity of teacher, patriarch, priest, dispenses lessons of virtue for which Socrates would have gladly sat at his feet, and pours out at the household altar the pure offering of the innocent, contented, thankful hearts which Providence has bound up with his.

Nor does it take centuries or generations to transform the den of pagan strife and misery into the Christian home. In many of the islands of the Southern Pacific, where twenty-five years ago there were only hordes of naked, filthy savages, destitute of all the arts and the decencies of life, may now be seen whole villages of neatly whitewashed cottages, clean, well furnished and well ordered, the families neatly and tastefully clad, happy in the discharge of all domestic duties and charities, "singing the songs of Zion in a strange land," and uniting in the morning and evening sacrifice to "Him in whom all the families of the earth are blessed." We feel tempted

to quote from the speeches of some of these islanders at an anniversary meeting held at one of the Hervey islands. The peculiar rhetoric gives us ample warrant of the reporter's fidelity, even were he a less reliable man than the eminently learned, faithful, and philanthropic Williams, the leading spirit of the London Mission in the South Sea Islands.

“ ‘ Let us remember,’ said the first speaker, ‘ our former state, — how many children were killed, and how few were kept alive ; but now none are destroyed. Parents now behold with pleasure their three, five, and even their ten children ; the majority of whom would have been murdered, had not God sent his word to us. Now hundreds of these are daily taught the word of God. We knew not that we possessed that invaluable property, — a living soul.’ ”

“ Then said Fenuapeho : — ‘ We were dwelling formerly in a dark house among centipedes, lizards, spiders, and rats ; nor did we know what evil and despicable things were around us. The lamp of life, the word of God, has been brought, and now we behold with dismay and disgust these abominable things. Some are killing each other this very day, while we are rejoicing ; some are destroying their children, while we are saving ours ; some are burning themselves in the fire, while we are bathing in the cool waters of the Gospel.’ ”

“ Then Mahamene continued the narrative : — ‘ The servants of our chiefs would enter our houses, and strip us of every thing. The master of the house would sit as a poor captive, without daring to speak, while they would seize his rolls of cloth, kill the fattest of his pigs, pluck the best of his bread-fruit, and take the very posts of his house for firewood with which to cook them. Is there not one here, who buried his new canoe in the sand, to hide it from them ? But now all these customs are abolished ; we live in peace, without fear. We do not now hide our pigs underneath our beds, and use our rolls of cloth for pillows to secure them ; our pigs may now run where they please, and our property may hang in our houses, no one touching it. Now we have cinet bedsteads ; we have excellent sofas to sit on, neat plastered houses to dwell in, and our property we can call our own.’ ” *

We have thus endeavoured to present what seems to us the chief point of contrast between ancient and modern, pagan and Christian civilization. The difference consists

* Williams's *Missionary Enterprises in the South Sea Islands*, pp. 220 — 222.

not so much in what the few might, as in what all may, attain. The growth of refinement and luxury in the ancient states increased the burdens and multiplied the disabilities of the multitude, while every new element of Christian culture tends to elevate the masses. The social landscape of the Periclean and the Augustan age shows us mountains reaching to the clouds, separated by awfully deep, sunless ravines, both equally barren. Christian ideas and institutions are constantly tending so to remodel society, that gently swelling hills shall alternate with fertile, well-watered valleys, and that there shall be verdure, bloom, and beauty alike on hill and plain. The work, indeed, is only begun ; but every antagonist principle with which it has to contend belongs to the old order of things, is of pagan origin, and is already yielding ground, as Christian ideas more and more pervade the great heart of society, are embodied in literature, adopted by governments, and made active by individual philanthropy.

ART. VIII. — 1. *The Past, the Present, and the Future.*

By H. C. CAREY, Author of "Principles of Political Economy," etc. Philadelphia : Carey and Hart. 1848. 8vo. pp. 474.

2. *The Religious Theory of Civil Government : a Discourse delivered before the Governor and the Legislature of Massachusetts, at the Annual Election, Wednesday, January 5th, 1848.* By ALEXANDER H. VINTON, Rector of St. Paul's Church. Boston : Dutton and Wentworth, Printers. 8vo. pp. 46.

MANY excellent persons, if we may judge from their repeated declarations, have come to entertain very desponding views respecting the condition and prospects of the American people. They say that it is all over with the republic, that our country is too large for union, too sordid for patriotism, and too democratic for liberty ; and that our doom is sealed, and we are fast hurrying to ruin. We cannot wonder that such thoughts find frequent utterance, since, from the rapidity of communication from one extremity of the land to the other, and from the craving of the public mind for news and scan-